

Message Text

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14

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SY-10 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

RSC-01 PER-05 L-03 SS-20 SPC-03 DRC-01 /079 W

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R 030539Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4982

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD BY POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: APER AFSP UR CASC

SUBJ: SOVIET CUSTOMS INSPECTION OF MARINE GUARDS

REF: STATE 219296, MOSCOW 13468, 13036

1. USA DIVISION FIRST SECRETARY TRIFONOV CALLED CONSOFFS TO MFA DECEMBER 28 TO PRESENT ORAL STATEMENT GIVING MFA REPLY TO EMBASSY NOTE ON RECENT STRICT CUSTOMS INSPECTIONS OF MARINE GUARDS. AFTER READING STATEMENT, TRIFONOV GAVE CONSOFFS WRITTEN TEXT, COPY OF WHICH BEING POUCHED DEPT, EUR/SOV.

2. FOLLOWING IS INFORMAL EMBASSY TRANSLATION OF MFA ORAL STATEMENT: AS RESULT THOROUGH INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED BY SOVIET CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES IN CONNECTION WITH EMBASSY NOTE 1271 OF 25 OCTOBER, FOLLOWING HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED. DELAY IN COMPLETING BORDER FORMALITIES ON PART SGT. DURLING WAS BECAUSE CONSIDERABLE OVERLOADING OF AIRPORT (GROUND) FACILITIES AT THAT TIME CAUSED DELAY IN DELIVERY OF BAGGAGE FROM AIRPORT TO CUSTOMS AREA. DURING COURSE OF CUSTOMS INSPECTION, WHICH TOOK PLACE IN USUAL POLITE MANNER AND WITHOUT DELAY, ONLY ONE PIECE OF BAGGAGE WAS EXAMINED AND NONE OF ARTICLES CITED IN EMBASSY NOTE WERE OPENED. AS FOR SGT. POLK, BORDER AND CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES HAVE NO RECORD OF HIS HAVING PASSED CONTROLS SEPTEMBER 21. REQUEST OF SOVIET CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES FOR EMBASSY TO PROVIDE PRECISE DATE THIS CASE HAS GONE UNANSWERED. RESULTS OF

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INVESTIGATION DEMONSTRATE THAT EMBASSY HAS NO BASIS FOR ITS

CLAIM THAT EMBASSY EMPLOYEES HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO "UNUSUALLY DILATORY AND STRICT" CUSTOMS INSPECTION. ADHERING TO PRINCIPLE OF RECIPROCITY, SOVIET AUTHORITIES CARRY OUT CUSTOMS SERVICING OF EMPLOYEES OF AMERICAN ESTABLISHMENTS USSR EXPEDITIOUSLY AND POLITELY.

3. CONSOFFS EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR FACT THAT INVESTIGATION WAS CONDUCTED AND FOR ASSURANCES OF POLITE AND EXPEDITIOUS CUSTOMS TREATMENT AS GIVEN IM MFA STATEMENT. WITHOUT BELABORING POINT, CONSOFF NOTED TO TRIFONOV THAT EXACT DATE POLK'S DEPARTURE HAD BEEN SUBMITTED.

4. COMMENT: MFA STATEMENT THAT ON BAIS RECIPROCITY POLITE AND EXPEDITIOUS CUSTOMS TREATMENT IS AFFORDED BY SOVIET AUTHORITIES APPEARS TO CONSTITUTE SUFFICIENT ASSURANCE FOR TIME BEING THAT THIS MATTER IS TAKEN SERIOUSLY. IT IS NOTEWORTHY IN THIS REGARD THAT WHEN CONSOFF RAISED THIS WITH TRIFONOV AT MFA RECEPTION DECEMBER 21, LATTER POINTEDLY INQUIRED WHETHER SUCH INCIDENT HAD OCCURRED SINCE EMBASSY APPROACH (OCTOBER 26). WHEN CONSOFF REPLIED NEGATIVELY, TRIFONOV COMMENTED TO EFFECT: "YOU SEE, SO MATTERS ARE NOW IN ORDER." CONSOFF POINTED OUT THAT EMBASSY NONETHELESS HAD REQUESTED FORMAL REPLY, AND TRIFONOV SAID HE WOULD "TAKE ANOTHER LOOK" AT EMBASSY NOTE. FORMAL MFA REPLY FOLLOWED. EXEMPT.SOMMERLATTE

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